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GOVERNOR



State of Vermont
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

For Immediate Release:
Thursday, March 25, 2004

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**GOVERNOR DOUGLAS ISSUES DRAFT OF *VERMONT*
*TELECOMMUNICATIONS PLAN & URGES PUBLIC COMMENT***

Montpelier, Vt.-Saying that the deployment of advanced telecommunications services, specifically high-speed broadband and quality wireless voice services, are critical to Vermont's economic future and a central component of his job creation agenda, Governor Jim Douglas today issued for public review and comment the Vermont Telecommunications Plan.

"In order for Vermont to be competitive, we need to be able to communicate anywhere, anytime; in short, we need to wire Vermont," Governor Douglas said.

Douglas has proposed a far-reaching initiative that within four years would make certain Vermonters have 100 percent wireless coverage on our major transportation arteries and that 90 percent of homes and businesses have broadband internet access. "A modern telecommunications system is vital if Vermont is to create and retain jobs," Douglas said.

Public Service Commissioner David O'Brien noted that the Governor has identified the advancement of telecommunications infrastructure as a vital component of Vermont's future and that "this plan lays out a vision, concrete goals and objectives. In addition, its technical reports are a tremendous resource for industry planners and citizens alike."

The plan addresses major ongoing developments in the telecommunications industry, including the growing importance of broadband and wireless telecommunications service.

The plan also seeks to identify policies and actions that will encourage needed investment, promote network quality and reliability, and adjust to changes being brought about by the spread of competition and new means for delivering voice, video, and data services. And it examines what steps will be needed to preserve the state's long-standing commitment to universal service in telecommunications.

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The plan also identifies important communications requirements for public safety and various opportunities for public sector users to take advantage of telecommunications technologies, especially those opportunities that are possible in conjunction with the new Department of Information and Innovation.

The plan is posted on the web at www.thinkvermont.com/telecomplan and will be available at regional planning commissions, regional libraries and on request from the Department.

The Department will hold three public hearings in April on the draft. Additional public hearings will be held after the future release of a final draft and before the release of a final plan, as required by statute.

Governor Douglas said fostering job creation in the technology sector requires meeting the needs of this fast growing business sector.

“And while the technology sector shares many of the same needs as other employers - a predictable regulatory environment, a talented and trained workforce, reasonably priced housing, access to capital, affordable health insurance options and a manageable cost of doing business - Vermont’s ability to create a modern, affordable, and universally accessible telecommunications network is crucial to the state’s economic future,” he said while brandishing the report. “That is why I am so pleased to release for public comment today this ambitious telecommunications plan for Vermont.”

The dates and locations of the public hearings are:

April 13, 7-10 p.m., Burlington, Memorial Auditorium Annex, 250 Main Street

April 19, 6-10 p.m. at any one of these Vermont Interactive Television studios--
Bennington, Mt. Anthony Lodge, 504A Main Street, Basement
Brattleboro, BDCC Business Park, Unit 100, 22 Browne Court
Castleton, Castleton State College, Stafford Academic Center Room 142
Colchester, 76 King Street, Suite 1
Johnson, Johnson State College, Bentley Hall Room 211
Lyndonville, Lyndon State College, 1001 College Road
Middlebury, Hannaford Career Center, 51 Charles Ave, 2nd Floor
Newport, North Country Union High School, 209 Veterans Ave.
Randolph Center, Vermont Technical College, Morrill Hall
Springfield, Howard Dean Education Center, 307 South Street
St. Albans, Bellows Free Academy, 4 Hospital Drive
Waterbury, State Office Complex, Stanley Hall
White River Jct., Community College of Vermont, 52 Olcott Drive

April 21, 7-10 p.m., Rutland, City Hall, 230 Main St., 2nd Floor

Copies of the plan or information about the process may be obtained from the Department of Public Service by calling 802 828-2811, via electronic mail to vt dps@state.vt.us , or by writing to the Department of Public Service, 112 State Street, Drawer 20, Montpelier, VT 05620-2601. Comments are always welcome.

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